

The Community of Garður

Policy relating to immigrants

Supporting the adjustment of immigrants living in Garður is one aspect of developing the community in a way that allows each individual to blossom and prosper. Care has to be taken to ensure that immigrants enjoy the same rights as others and to ensure they are equal to all others in every way. Cultural differences have to be looked upon as opportunities, where knowledge, culture and education of individuals of different origin are used to the advantage of all people living in the Community of Garður.

It is important to increase cultural knowledge in every possible way and care taken that no injustice develops based on people's origins. Ways shall be sought to make it easier for people of foreign origin to settle in the community and to learn and adapt to Icelandic habits and culture. At the same time it shall be acknowledged that foreigners will retain their own culture and habits in addition to keeping ties to their home country. The communication between people needs to be characterised by knowledge, broadmindedness and mutual respect. The council of Garður will make every effort so that this mutual adaptation becomes sustainable. It will support this with the following goals.

- ▶ **The interest of immigrants and their children.** The Council of Garður will seek to include the interests of immigrants and their children in all its policies, administration and service.
- ▶ **Education against prejudice.** The Council has to work systematically against prejudice with methods supporting mutual adaptation. Special emphasis shall be on preventive work, education on prejudice, discrimination and multicultural education within the educational institutions. This shall be done e.g. through educational meetings for the staff of the institutions and for the public.
- ▶ **Interpretation and translation of information.** Consideration has to be taken of the special needs of foreigners and it needs to be seen to that they can make full use of all public services. Special attention shall be paid to interpretation and translation of forms and information on the council's website.
- ▶ **Services to children whose native language is not Icelandic.** Children with a different native language from Icelandic have to be able to make full use of the school-system. Their needs shall be met by teaching Icelandic as a second language and by an emphasis on suitable teaching methods. Education about the background and culture of pupils shall be based on equality. The children shall also have lessons in learning their own language as far as can be provided. The communication between schools and parents shall be conducted in ways which enable foreign parents to understand the Icelandic school system and the education of their children.

- ▶ **Icelandic for immigrants.** Inhabitants of foreign origin will be given the opportunity to learn Icelandic and they shall be encouraged to learn the language. Those willing to learn shall be offered the facilities to do so. We shall ensure that no-one is prevented from learning the language by difficulties such as workload, poverty, isolation or lack of opportunity. The Icelandic courses shall be held at least annually.

- ▶ **Accessibility of information.** Information on services, rights and duties shall be accessible in one place for foreigners. In this way immigrants have more opportunity to enjoy what the community has to offer. This shall be done by providing information on rights and duties in immigrants own language. This will be handed to them when they register in the community.

- ▶ **Implementation.** The policies on the issues and welfare of immigrants shall be carried out in an organised manner according to the financial budget each year.

Garður, December 9th. 2009.